

EXTENSION LIVESTOCK PROGRAM

King County offers the livestock owner a temperate climate with lush spring grasses, hot summers and wet winters. While all of these elements have their benefits they can also cause a lot of problems for the livestock owner. The lush green pasture can be too rich for some animals and cause illness. The hot summers mean the grass stops growing while the weeds continue. The wet winters can cause excessive mud and create drainage and run off problems. The impact of each of these situations can vary greatly depending upon the knowledge and management style of the livestock owner. Accurate,



Farm visit to Bullock Farms Romneys in Enumclaw.

useable information is needed as more people without a livestock background choose to own livestock, and as land restrictions and regulations impact how the land can be used. The number of people keeping small livestock in their backyards is also growing. WSU King County Extension Livestock Program, in partnership with the King County Livestock Program, offers technical, timely information to livestock owners through the Extension Livestock Advisor volunteer training program, workshops and educational booths at community events and businesses.

Photo R. Reinlasoder

Program Mission:

To empower the livestock community to make informed decisions, by promoting animal health and sustainable land and water management.

Program details:

The Extension Livestock Advisor (ELA) training program started in the fall of 1982 in Snohomish County and taught the volunteers the most current research based information, which they then shared with the livestock community. The program was brought to King County in 1995 and it still offers research-based information from local and regional experts in the various livestock fields.

ELA's agree to volunteer a minimum of 80 hours during the first year after completing the training, and 20 hours each subsequent year to stay active in the program. Volunteers help put on workshops, farm tours and staff educational booths as well as working with youth groups and breed organizations. Some volunteers do research and update resources while others put together presentations and educational displays. Some prefer to answer questions over the phone from the ELA Hotline and take referrals from the office. As of June 15, a total of 400 hours have

been logged by 23 volunteers for 2005 and over 430 citizens have been helped.

Training topics include: all major and exotic livestock species, best management practices for pasture management, mud, manure, streams and wetlands, farm management and planning, water quality and soils, weed control, pests and predators, animal health, nutrition, disaster preparedness, biosecurity and farm safety and local regulations.



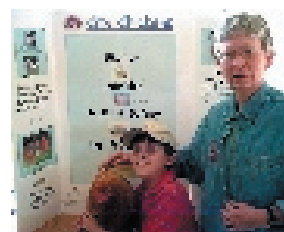
Sow and piglets at the WSU Swine Research Station
Photo WSU Research Staff

Extension Livestock Program -- New in 2005

This year the Livestock program is going through some changes as it continues to strive to meet the needs of the livestock community. Instead of the usual ten week ELA training, a series of workshops are being held throughout the county. Topics include hay, poultry, pasture weeds, using composted livestock manure, a series of four core classes on nutrition, health, farm management, forages and weeds in the fall and a day long workshop on each species throughout the winter months.

WSU Extension and Seattle Tilth partnered to present *Household Hens: Raising Chickens in Your Backyard* as part of the WSU Extension Education Events series. With 50 people in attendance, one of our volunteers gave a stellar PowerPoint presentation with handouts, posters and humor. An advanced poultry workshop will present more in-depth education this winter.

In partnership with King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks, we are holding a series of workshops on *Using Composted Livestock Manure* for the urban gardener, landscaper and property owner. These workshops provide an opportunity to partner livestock owners who have excess manure with gardeners wanting a low or no cost soil amendment. The composting process is explained and the many uses of compost are covered in detail with hands-on demonstrations.



Bingo Chicken with Bingo Buchwald in Magnolia.

Photo: J. Goldberg

Hay! It's what's for dinner! (and breakfast and lunch) workshops in January and May educated 65 animal owners of all ages on the importance of high quality hay and the possible problems associated with lesser quality hay. In addition to the workshops, WSU King County Extension purchased a hay core sampling probe so that core samples can be sent to a lab for analysis.

Bringing Research Based Knowledge to Livestock and Landowners in King County

Success:

The fourth annual Small Farm Expo again provided volunteer ELA's with many opportunities to volunteer time and talent. The educational booth had over a hundred visitors get their questions answered, while other volunteers helped with setting up and running the Expo. Still other volunteers gave demonstrations on goat milking, goat packing for pleasure, and heritage turkeys. A total of 76 hours were logged by 12 volunteers.



Extension Livestock Advisor Judy Bevaart demonstrating how to milk goats.

Photo: WSU Staff

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